

SPEECH OF
MR. J. A. WOODWARD, of S. Carolina.
On the relations between the United States and the Territories.
Delivered in the House of Representatives, July 3, 1848.

The House being in Committee of the Whole on the State of the Union, and the Civil and Diplomatic Appropriation Bill, Mr. WOODWARD, of South Carolina, being called on, rose and said: Mr. Chairman: Some days since I thought proper to address the House in reply to a speech made by the honorable gentleman from Virginia, (Mr. Bayly), upon the question of the right of Congress to legislate for the territories upon the public lands. It was not my intention at that time to go into the general argument, but only to develop the true practical issue before the country, and to show that he had not presented it fully and fairly. True, in order to prevent any misunderstanding, I used the occasion to define my position, but with no view of entering upon an argument in defense of it. I expressly reserved that for a future occasion. I shall submit to you now offered.

Are slaveholders, under the common Constitution of the Union, entitled, with their slaves, to enter upon, purchase and occupy, public lands, which are the property of the United States? This is the question. I have taken public interest in any inquiry into the power of Congress within the territory, except as it affects this question. I care as little about the authority attributed to the first settlers or Mexican pre-occupants of the territory, as I care about the institutions left in the conquered territories by Mexico, except as they bear upon this question. If I could have a guaranty that the rights, honor, and safety of the Southern States and people should be secured, I would be disposed to indulge gentlemen in any opinions they might choose to entertain in relation to these abstract questions. If you could separate their reasoning from the practical consequences that are to flow from it, I would be disposed to reason as best suited their fancies. But, sir, in the nature of things such a separation is impossible. The vital interests, if not the very safety of the South, are dependent upon the result of the argument. The Southern States, their logic is to be law to the South; radical, fundamental law; law upon which our destiny is to depend, unless we should choose to take our country out of the hands of the people. Their logic is to be law to the South; radical, fundamental law; law upon which our destiny is to depend, unless we should choose to take our country out of the hands of the people.

But, Mr. Chairman, I shall proceed with the argument. And my intention is to present a fair and ingenious argument. I shall would no gentleman feelingly and warmly as I do, to every one who would not follow an example of frank and liberal discussion.

"The people of the territories have exclusive right to manage their own internal affairs, and to elect their own representatives to Congress. To be met. Sir, there runs throughout this phrase more lurking sophistry than was ever couched in the same number of words, while on its front it presents about as available an ad captum as a politician could readily contrive to make use of for any electioneering emergency whatever.

In the first place, occupants found upon a public domain, external to some pre-existing territory, are not to be called a people. If we are to have any regard for political science as taught from Kant backwards through the whole train of public writers. Except we mean to repudiate all such political science, we are obliged to recognize and act on our forefathers, and assume to ordain new doctrines and ideas according as the exigency of party may require, no one can be warranted in calling such inhabitants as have taken up their abode upon the day, it is not to argue this question. I shall take it for granted that gentlemen who step forth to argue such questions know something—at least, that when the occasion indicates the necessity of doing it they will look into the matter, and do something. How many individuals buying tracts of land in the public domain would constitute a people? How close together would they reside to constitute them one people? How far apart would they be scattered to constitute them a people? How many individuals buying tracts of land in the public domain would constitute a people? How close together would they reside to constitute them one people? How far apart would they be scattered to constitute them a people?

In the third place: This people, it is said, have a right to manage their own "internal affairs"—to govern themselves. Now, sir, it is here assumed that all affairs internal to their supposed limits are their affairs. No one has any rights there but themselves. True, we, the people of the United States, are the owners of 99 acres in a hundred of all the lands there, and these inhabitants could have no greater right than we to purchase land and under our laws have acquired lands beyond the fragments of land that each one severally occupies. We are the owners of all intermediate tracts separating one settler from another, and of the region encompassing them about, to a certain extent. And yet, when, upon the pretexts of having become the owners of a few acres, at a nominal price, or probably no price at all, they assume to qualify our title to all the rest; to determine what shall be the state of human society in all the rest; to compel us, the very owners, upon a political test, to practise a sort of naturalization system, to the exclusion of a part of the natural owners of the soil, they are said to be doing nothing more than managing their internal affairs. Sir, it is not manifest that, in excluding the people of the South from the public lands, the settlers would be assuming to do more than manage their own internal affairs.

There is still a brief general view of the subject. It is an essential part of a people or commonwealth that it possess certain geographical limits. It must have place on the earth, and know its place; and, to constitute it an independent State, it must be capable of maintaining its limits and excluding all jurisdictions it has not consented to admit. It must also, and most especially, have the power of preserving its own unity and indivisibility, to prevent its own subdivision and disintegration. It must have the power of settling when tried by these tests: Suppose one settlement should refuse to unite with another settlement, where would be the authority to coerce it? Which would be supreme over the other? Who would define and settle the question of boundary between them?

In the Oregon country there is a colony on the Willamette river. Its whole occupancy is not greater than 30 miles square. Oregon is about 100 miles square. Has this colony jurisdiction throughout the whole region? Are all the "affairs" internal to that region internal affairs? Does their diminutive "self" fill all the land, and upon the idea of self-government, entitle them to cover the land? It must be manifest that, if not, what is their compass and extent? How far beyond the border settlements? Are their boundary lines straight or crooked? Suppose the United States should declare that the colony is not a part of the United States? They might be refused to enter upon, purchase and occupy, public lands, which are the property of the United States.

Vol. 1.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

No. 11.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.

Washington, Friday, June 28, 1850.